

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



19 November 2015

Mr M Downes
Headteacher
St John's CofE Primary School
80 Nottingham Road
Stapleford
Nottingham
NG9 8AQ

Dear Mr Downes

Short inspection of St John's CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 5 November 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in April 2011.

This school continues to be good.

You have maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You have established a school community with strong 'family feel' to it. That is something valued very highly by the pupils and their parents. The close and nurturing relationships between the pupils and with the staff, which that sense of being a family entails, provide a solid foundation for the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and for their good academic progress.

The pupils develop very positive attitudes towards lessons and learning and demonstrate a desire to do well. The work in their books shows care and pride in what they do. The pupils are amiable and approachable and have a healthy sense of curiosity. They show a deep sense of liking for and pride in their school, which is echoed in their parents' views. As a result, the pupils' attendance, which was an area for improvement at the last inspection, has improved and is now a little above average.

The strengths of the school which were noted at the last inspection have been sustained and built upon, through a period of considerable change, including a fairly lengthy, temporary relocation. The areas for improvement identified at that inspection have been tackled effectively. You and the staff demonstrate a commitment to the continual improvement of the school. This is evident, for

example, through your work to secure a fully consistent system of assessment and marking.

Both the pupils and their parents raised no concerns about behaviour and commented only on minor instances of misbehaviour, which both groups felt are dealt with swiftly and effectively. The pupils say that bullying does not happen; they attribute that to the sense of being a family. The school's records show that instances of any form of misbehaviour are rare. The pupils say that, very occasionally, their learning in lessons can be slowed by a little misbehaviour, but never for any length of time. They are fully confident that the staff deal quickly and effectively with any behaviour issues.

The pupils talk convincingly about how the school's values motivate them and influence their behaviours and attitudes. The school's motto, Believe, Endeavour, Succeed Together (BEST), has more than symbolic meaning for them. A comment by one pupil, 'St John's is the best school ever', was typical of quite a few others and similar to some from parents also.

Safeguarding is effective.

The policies and practices that you have put in place for safeguarding the pupils are fit for purpose. The staff understand the school's systems and put them into practice. They are up to date with the latest guidance from the government and receive regular training, along with the governing body. Individual members of staff and others with specific responsibilities for safeguarding are prepared to follow up on actions to make sure that necessary things happen. The school works closely with other agencies, when necessary.

As a result, the pupils say emphatically that they feel well cared for and safe at the school all of the time. There is also a very high level of satisfaction among parents with this aspect of the school's work.

Inspection findings

- The quality of teaching has improved, and continues to improve, as a result of the leadership provided by the senior leaders and the governing body.
- You have undertaken major work to revamp, root and branch, the way in which the school assesses what the pupils have learned and how well, and also to give the pupils better guidance about their learning. This has not been the work of a moment, particularly given the high proportion of changes in staffing since the last inspection and the temporary relocation of the school. The new ways of working are being put into practice, but it was evident from my visit that now they need to be secured and are not yet used consistently to best effect.
- You identified, astutely, that the pupils' writing skills have generally been weaker than other aspects of their learning. After careful analysis of information about

the pupils' writing skills, you identified the specific difficulties that the pupils were experiencing and changed the approach to the way that writing is taught, starting in Key Stage 1.

- In that approach, you have built carefully on the success that the school has had in teaching pupils about the sounds that letters represent (phonics) and added to that a systematic approach to teaching the pupils about how to construct sentences, in conjunction with an 'exciting writing' initiative.
- You are beginning to see the success of this approach start to work its way through the school; the proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in phonics has risen steadily and is now above average. There was a significant improvement in the pupils' success in the writing test at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2015, so that the pupils were just above average.
- The pupils are attentive in lessons, concentrate well and are very responsive to the teachers. They find the work that they are given to do interesting and are concerned to do their best, even with difficult tasks.
- The teachers devise tasks that not only promote the acquisition of essential skills, such as writing, but also help the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. For example, poems written by Year 5 and Year 6 pupils about Nazi concentration camps showed them reflecting deeply on human suffering.
- The staff in the early years make intelligent use of detailed information about the progress of the children; this information is now at the heart of a much more rigorous approach to how the school judges the quality of its provision in the early years.
- You have made significant improvements to the quality of the outdoor learning area for the early years. The very real constraints of the school site and the fact that it is a listed building mean that you are unable to use the outdoor area as freely as the teachers would like.
- Nevertheless, careful and thorough planning by the teachers ensures that the children get good opportunities to learn outdoors every day. For example, I observed the children watching the teacher toast marshmallows in the playground, on what was, after all, Guy Fawkes' Day; I listened to them talking about what was happening to the marshmallows and how to tell when they were done, in response to probing questions by the teacher.
- You have worked successfully to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. You are able to provide detailed evidence about the school's flexible approach to meeting the needs of these pupils. The staff know the individual pupils and their needs well and the school uses the additional funding that it receives from the government directly to support those needs.
- The fact that disadvantaged pupils are making increasingly better rates of progress is evident in examples of their work and in the information that the school holds about their progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, these pupils are now making at least the progress expected of them, better in some subjects, and a bit better progress than their peers.

- You analyse carefully which elements of the support you provide for disadvantaged pupils are most helpful to them and change what you do based on what you learn. You do not, however, report in any detail on the school's website about the impact of the school's use of the additional funding for these pupils, as you are required to do.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- the revised approaches to assessment and marking are secured, to achieve the intended aim of providing the pupils with guidance that supports their learning and demonstrably helps them to improve
- there is a clear report available on the school's website to show the impact of the use of additional funding received by the school to support disadvantaged pupils.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Nottinghamshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Clive Moss

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with senior leaders, representatives of the governing body, members of staff in charge of the early years, the Key Stage 1 coordinator, the designated persons responsible for safeguarding, the special educational needs coordinator, and with a group of teaching and other staff. I made a series of visits to lessons jointly with the headteacher, spending time in all classrooms at different times of the day. I examined examples of the pupils' work. I held a range of discussions with a wide variety of pupils, informally when observing breaktimes and during lessons and formally with a group of pupils. I observed the pupils' behaviour around the school, at breaktimes and during lessons. I met with parents at the beginning of the school day, looked at the views of parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the summary of responses to the school's recent survey of parents. I examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, behaviour records and policies, the latest achievement and attendance information held by the school, and records relating to the school's work to monitor the quality of teaching.